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# Maine Farmer.

Published for the Proprietor,  
S. L. BOARDMAN, Editor.

Our Home, Our Country, and Our Brother Man.  
Moonshine Farming.

MEANS, EDITOR:—I wish you would give the readers of the *Farmer* a chapter on signs—your views in regard to the numerous signs and superstitions which abound: such as the influence of the moon on vegetation and on the shrinkage of meat in the pot while boiling; on peas running to vines if planted at such a time of the moon; also the signs of the zodiac on animals, the influence of the tide, &c. By so doing you will oblige me.

In answer to the queries and request of our correspondent's communication, a part of which is given above, we would say that the history of the world proves that the superstitions of mankind are among the hardest of all things to eradicate. Even after truth has been demonstrated and what was once a mystery, fully explained, there is still, in a feeling of regret, left for the old belief, and a feeling of regret in giving up old opinions in which was incorporated something of the supernatural. Hence it is that the "signs" and the superstitious notions of the dark ages still cling to those who boast of living in a superior light and knowledge, and a firm belief still remains in the minds of many, otherwise very sensible people, that the moon and the constellations have a ruling power over the natural, and even the spiritual world.

These notions were first put into what may be called a systematic form, by the old Egyptian and other Astrologers, and is a part of the heathen mythology. It was once a religious belief and connected with their systems of heathen worship. At the present day, if it is not a religious belief and has nothing to do with our systems of worship, it is nevertheless believed by many most religiously and followed much more carefully than the adopted and believed mode of modern worship. The strong imaginations of the Chaldees, who spent their nights in the open air in that warm country, led them to group certain clusters and ranges of stars together, making, as they fancied, the outlines which might be drawn around them resemble certain animals or things. As, during each month, owing to the annual revolution of the earth in its orbit around the sun, different clusters or ranges of these stars came more directly overhead, or in the zenith, they fancied that those constellations to which they had given a form and a name, had a controlling influence over the times and seasons pertaining to that month. They had also supposed that certain planets were the representative manifestations of certain of their gods. One planet belonged to Jupiter, another to Mars, another to Venus, and so on, and whoever was in the zenith or meridian of that locality, was under the special keeping of that particular deity, and had a character in accordance or rather in concordance with that deity. They therefore believed that, by knowing in what year, day or month, and what hour of the day a person was born, an Astrologer, by casting a horoscope—that is, making a plan and calculation of what planets and constellations were above the horizon at that given time, could tell, not only the character of that person, but what fortunes were to attend him through life. Connected with this was the little that was known in medicine, surgery and the physiology of animal life. All bowed down to the belief of the deity. Every plant and every metal was under the special care of some one of their deities. Every part of the human or animal system was under the influence of some of the constellations or signs, as the figures of the zodiac were called. Thus, in their religious notions, the head was their special care, and then the heart, and then the arms, and then the feet, and so on. The moon, too, as she waxed and waned was, in their eyes, a potent agent for good or for evil. A perusal of some of those curious old astrological and alchemical books would show you with what mistaken faith and fervent zeal they had mapped out the human system, and with what solemn belief they had distributed all the supernatural agencies and how they were to be used and how to be observed. The earlier alchemists were prepared with reference to the workings of these agencies and were studied and kept with religious faith by the people. Our modern alchemists have continued to copy too many of these absurdities and to them may be attributed in great degree the lingering belief in these learned and truly venerable notions. It is only when the spring influences and your own industry has prepared the earth just right for it, regardless of the moon or the position of any of the constellations or signs of the zodiac—that the best time to kill your pork and your beef is as soon as you have got it as fat as you wish, on good substantial food. And here we will say, what you will probably find by trial and observation to be true, that the shrinking of either, when boiled, is owing more to what you have fed with, in conjunction with a healthy condition of the animal, than to the sun, moon and all the stars put together.

We once had a worthy old uncle who observed these signs and wonders implicitly. He always killed his hogs on the increase of the moon—the meat never shrank in boiling—but then we always noticed that he had fed them a month before killing them, on dry hard corn, and as much as they would eat. This was the cause of his plump pork, and not the shining of the moon whether round or gibbous.

The true doctrine is to study the physiology of the plants and animals—their wants and requirements, and be governed thereby, and let the moon, and signs and wonders, and all heathen gods and goddesses slide.

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## Notes on our Copy Drawer.

A WINTER GARDEN. It is not often that one sees corn a foot high, peas eight inches from the ground, and cabbage plants large enough to set out, in the interior of this snow-covered State, on the 9th of March. Yet we find these, and other vegetables in a similar state of forwardness in the conservatory of L. B. Jones, Esq., of South Norridgewock. The building is about 10 by 14 feet, with awning packed between the outer and inner boarding on the north and west, the south and east side being of glass. It is warmed by bottom heat, and besides containing the above named vegetables, also has bell-peppers, cauliflower, cucumbers and melons, tomatoes, &c., of sufficient age to transplant. To say nothing of the enjoyment to be derived from such a garden in winter—almost—we hope its owner will have the satisfaction of sitting down to a dinner of green peas, and other "fixings," of his own raising about the first of June, at which we would esteem it a favor to be invited.

BOOKS ABOUT SHEEP. Mr. S. E. Turner, of No. Cutler, inquires for the best work on the breeds and breeding of sheep, and asks if Goodale's "Principles of Breeding" gives much information in regard to sheep, the best breeds for wool, &c. "The Principles of Breeding" by Mr. Goodale has ever been issued in this country. It gives full and complete information on the characteristics of the various breeds, &c. &c. Price \$1.50. Randall's Sheep Husbandry, price \$1.50; Morrill's American Shepherd, price \$2; and Youatt's Treatise on Sheep, price 75 cts. are all good works. They can be had of A. Williams & Co., 100 Washington street, Boston.

A NEW APPLE. Mr. B. Walker, of So. Monmouth, sends us specimens of an apple from a young tree which has borne only two years, and last year produced about two bushels. One of the apples sent weighed seventeen ounces—was a little above the average—and Mr. Walker thinks the apple originated in New York State. The size is very large; of the true apple-form in shape; stem short, in a deep cavity; calyx medium in a deep basin; flesh yellowish, tender, rather coarse-grained, and of a mild acid flavor. Its keeping qualities are equal to the Baldwin. We are unable to identify the specimens.

REMEDY FOR CLAVES. A sure cure for claves in sheep, is communicated by Mr. Small of New Sharon, viz.: Oil the part affected with common lamp-oil—whole oil. One application will perfect a cure. It is simple and easily tried.

NEW PUBLICATIONS. Proceedings of the Ninth Session of the American Pomological Society, held in Boston, Sept. 1862. Published by the Society 80c. 231 pages.

The above work comprises the official reports of the Society, with lists of all the officers; Address of President Wilder; Catalogue of Fruits as revised by the general Fruit Committee; full reports of the various discussions which were held during the session; State Reports, and essays on Horticultural topics. It is admirably printed on nice paper, and forms a valuable work for standard reference in pomological matters. Annual Members, paying a fee of \$2 are entitled to the Transactions of the Society. Address the Treasurer, Thomas P. James, Philadelphia, Pa.

COMPLETE MANUAL on the Cultivation of Tobacco. New York: C. M. Saxton, 25 Park Row. Price 25 cts.

A useful and practical hand-book or guide for the selection of the soil best adapted to tobacco, and its preparation, kind and quality of manures to be used, and how applied, growth of plants, transplanting and mode of general culture from the time of planting the seed-bed, to harvesting, curing, and the preparation for market, with illustrations showing the plant in the different stages of its growth. The work furnishes just that practical and reliable information now wanted by our northern farmers, and the veteran publisher has done a good work in presenting it to the public. Can be got by the publisher, or of A. Williams & Co. 100 Washington Street, Boston.

Good Sheep. Among the good flocks of sheep in Somerset County, is the one owned by Mr. Ira S. Rogers, of Norridgewock. It numbers sixty-two, including twenty-two lambs that will clip four pounds of wool per head, and forty ewes with lamb, that will average 54—perhaps 45—lbs. of wool each. Mr. Rogers recently refused an offer of \$6.25 per head for the 40 ewes, on the ground that his wool and lambs would come to nearly that sum besides their keeping, and he would then have the sheep remaining. Although the sheep are kept on ordinary feed, they are in most excellent condition, which shows how good care and warm shelter will do for a flock that has not the best of feed.

Mr. Rogers' arrangement for feeding is simple, cheap, and quite effective. It is not exactly a rack, but a section, or one side of a rack, placed across the sheep-house, so as to feed from the main floor. It is about 24 feet high, and is made of boards 6 inches wide nailed to a 2 by 4 piece at the top and bottom. A space six inches wide is left for the sheep to feed through. It is made in separate sections, and when not in use in the summer, can be laid away without taking up much room.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Please have the goodness to inform me through the columns of the *Farmer* when the best time to sow plaster on meadow land, and oblige

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NOTE. As early in the spring as practicable after the snow has left the ground. It should be used in the ratio of about 100 pounds per acre, and an application will doubtless pay a good percent. For worn out or unproductive pastures a top-dressing of plaster would not only serve to retain the ammonia, but would convert the humus in the soil into food for plants, and wonderfully increase their value.—E.S.

WE are glad to know that the "American Stock Journal," which was discontinued last fall, has again been started. It is a most useful work for stock breeders, and is edited by D. C. Lindey. Published by C. M. Saxton, 25 Park Row, N. Y., at per ann. \$1.

NOTE. The Daniel O'Rourke is the earliest pea grown, but is surpassed in quality and productiveness by some others. The Electric is a very early sort, but is not equal in quality to Prince, which is one of the finest varieties grown, and is also extra early. Prince Albert and Sangster's No. 1, belong in the same class. We presume they can be had of Kendall & Whitney, Portland, or Mr. Dunning, Bangor, and at other seed stores.—E.S.

NOTE. There have been some 35 full-bloods brought into this section within one year of the Spanish Merino. After the next clip of wool comes off, I think we can tell of some as large fleeces as any country in this State. There are some very fine coarse-wooled fleeces which I will give you the outline of when I get at the facts. (Please do not send.)

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NOTE. Mr. Cushing of Vermont, in Dec. 1861, that sheared 20 lbs. of washed wool. This buck is a perfect model.

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NOTE. Mr. C











